

Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

March 10, 2018

WORSHIP

Our relationship with God

Last Sunday March 4:

Wilma Bailey reflected on the decision of Greta Lindecraz - a Mennonite from Colorado - to choose jail rather than testify in a death penalty case by considering whether the Bible sanctions state-sponsored killing. She explained that the distinction between murder and killing is a recent one, not one found in the Bible itself, and that the overall testimony of Scripture condemns killing in any form.

This Sunday March 11:

Brian will preach on the spiritual discipline of fasting. Arguing that modern, urban people tend to be more naive about our safety and self-sufficiency than those who live closer to the earth, he will suggest that fasting can be an important tool for helping us connect and depend more deeply on God.

Next Sunday March 18:

Frank Kandel will bring the message.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Relationships at Shalom

Pastor Brian on Vacation:

Brian will be on vacation from Monday, March 12 to Sunday, March 18 and will not be regularly checking his email or phone during that time. Pastoral concerns can be directed to Sabrina Falls or Frank Kandel during that time.

Calendar

*****Don't forget to spring forward for Daylight Savings Time!***

Sun. 9:30am Worship

11 am Sunday School

Mar. 13: 7pm Outreach Commission Mtg

Mar. 15: 6:30pm Meal/Bible Study

Mar. 16: 7pm Eastside Creation Care

Network's film night at Shalom

Mar. 18: 5pm Guess Who's Coming to Dinner

Mar. 21: 7am Morning Breakfast Group

Apr. 1: 8:30am Easter breakfast

Apr. 29: 6:30pm 5th Sunday Hymn Sing

DISCIPLING

Growing in our relationships

Catholic Economics Class Update:

The Catholic Economics class will discuss chapter 12- free trade and fair trade. - Wilma Bailey

OUTREACH

Relationships beyond Shalom

Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2018:

Whether you're newly interested in effective advocacy from a Christ-centered perspective or you're an experienced advocate wanting to network and explore issues, join MCC at the Ecumenical Advocacy Days near Washington DC on April 20-23. The event will focus on the up-rootedness of our world, exploring ways to seek change and advance hope through prayer, worship, advocacy, training and networking. MCC Great Lakes is sending a 12-passenger van to the event and has spots available. To secure your spot or for more information, contact Susan Mark Landis at SusanMarkLandis@gmail.com. For more information, visit advocacydays.org.

Eastside Creation Care Film:

On Friday, March 16 at 7pm, the Eastside Creation Care Network will host a showing of the film *I Am* at Shalom Mennonite Church. This documentary follows the changed life of a Hollywood director as he interviews several

leading public intellectuals and social activists in the world - including Desmond Tutu, Howard Zinn, and Noam Chomsky - in an effort to learn how we can make the world a better place.

2018 Spring Clothing Drive:

Through Sunday, March 18, Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis is holding a clothing drive to collect gently used clothing in all sizes for children and adults from Indianapolis area congregations. How it works: Members of congregations collect gently used clothing and place them in white plastic kitchen trash bags. Members bring bags of clothing to their congregation March 2-18. During the week of March 19, congregation volunteers will deliver the clothing bags to the Family Promise Day Center. Based on the number of bags of donated clothing, Goodwill clothing vouchers are donated to Family Promise for guests to use in selecting clothing from a Goodwill Store.

Habitat Repair Project:

There are open volunteer spots on a home repair project near Shalom Mennonite Church on Priscilla Ave. Habitat for Humanity wanted to share the dates with our congregation in case there's interest in volunteering on March 27 or 28 from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Sign up here (<https://indyhabitat.volunteerhub.com>) or contact Abri (abri.houser@gmail.com) with questions.

ADMINISTRATION

Congregational support systems

Mennonite Church USA Job Openings:

Mennonite Church USA is seeking to fill three positions on the Executive Board staff: denominational minister for leadership development, associate executive director for church vitality and engagement, and denominational minister for faith formation. Find job summaries and how to apply on the MC USA website (<http://mennoniteusa.org/who-we-are/employment>).

Bulletin Boards:

Administration Commission is reviewing our use of the bulletin board spaces. If you'd like to offer input, please contact Abri at abri.houser@gmail.com by March 15. Thanks!

VISION AND ACCOUNTABILITY TEAM

Search Committee Update:

PTSC (Pastoral Team Search Committee) has submitted all the required documents to IN-MI Mennonite Conference. Conference will now use those profile documents to match potential pastoral candidates to Shalom for our review. Conference will assist us in filling both the paid and unpaid positions.

Any person that might be interested in serving in a pastoral team role here at Shalom should contact IN-MI conference. Contact any member of the PTSC for additional information. PTSC members are: Carol Bixler, Herb Troyer, Kristen Metzler-Wilson, Linda Kandel and Brad Sommer.

Milepost #355: The Discipline of Fasting

For the month of March, we turn our focus to the spiritual discipline of fasting. This is an appropriate discipline to study during the season of Lent, as it is the traditional time of fasting on the Christian calendar. Many of us give up some material or social comforts during Lent, which is a good thing to do. However, if we aren't careful, this can simply become an exercise of self-control rather than discipline that brings us closer to God. In order to experience its spiritual benefits, fasting should be coupled with prayer.

Fasting is almost always associated with prayer in the Bible. To be more precise, it is associated with petitionary prayer. When God's people are in crisis, when a threat looms in the distance, or when they are faced with a difficult decision, prophets and leaders call on the people to fast in order to more effectively communicate with God. We hear this theme over and over in the Bible: Jehoshaphat called on God's people to fast when they faced a Moabite attack (2 Chronicles 20:3), Esther called on God's people to fast when the Jews faced

annihilation in Persia (Esther 4:16), and Jonah was forced to call the Ninevites to fast, fearing – correctly – that it could result in their redemption (Jonah 3:4-5). The reason that we are invited to fast during Lent is to strengthen our prayer that God will remove sin from our lives. Not all fasting is petitionary, but fasting is especially encouraged when we want or need something from God.

However, the Bible is careful to point out that fasting is not a magical incantation that we can use to force God's hand. Although God's people are called to fast in times of need, even the most optimistic passages about fasting frame it in hopeful terms, "Return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning... Who knows whether God will not turn and relent and leave a blessing behind?" (Joel 2:12 & 14) By contrast, the harshest passages on fasting condemn those who assume that their fasting obligates God to do what they want: "Why do we fast but do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you did not notice?" Look, you serve only your own interests on your fast day." (Isaiah 58:3)

So why appeal for God's help through fasting if it doesn't guarantee a positive response? Because it opens up new possibilities that may not have existed before. For example, it is in the context of fasting that Daniel had a vision of how God's people would survive the reign of Persia (Daniel 10), even though it would take much longer than they hoped. It was in the context of fasting that the Holy Spirit called the fragile early church not to set roots in Antioch but to send out their best people as missionaries (Acts 13). Fasting is a way of expressing our utter dependence on God, and it is a prayer that God generally honors by speaking to us in response. However, God doesn't always answer our prayers in the ways that we expect or even desire. So while fasting is not to be a magic formula that always produces the results we want, it is a powerful tool for invoking God's help – in whatever way God sees fit – in our lives.

– Brian Bither

Do you have some thoughts to share about this month's spiritual discipline? The Pastoral

Team invites you to share your thoughts as one of the weekly milepost entries. Please email Sabrina, Frank, or Brian to explore this further.

Journeying Together is a weekly email newsletter of Shalom Mennonite Church: 6100 E 32nd St, 46226; (317) 549-0577 shalommennonite.com

Pastoral Team: Brian Bither, (317) 322-7320, brian@shalommennonite.com; Frank Kandel, (309) 532-2859, kandel93@gmail.com; Sabrina Falls, (317) 902-9495, sabrinafalls@outlook.com
Vision & Accountability Team: Brad Sommer, Jeanne Smucker, Wilma Bailey, Carl Rhine, Kim Johnson, Brian Bither

Please submit information by Thursday, 12pm, to Abri Hochstetler: abri.houser@gmail.com